

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting August 13-14, 2007

Monday, August 13, 2007

Members present: Mr. Stowe, Mr. Martin, Mr. Brennan, Rep. Cotty, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Drew, Sen. Fair, Sen. Hayes, Mrs. Murphy, Rep. Neal, Supt. Rex, Mr. Robinson, Rep. Walker, and Dr. Woodall

Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Stowe welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He outlined the purpose of the meeting as setting priorities for the coming year, encouraging engagement in the process of improvement and extending our commitment to strong schools. He asked Dr. Anderson to comment on several items. Dr. Anderson informed members of the progress on the Public Choice Innovation Schools, the contract with Louisiana State University on the ratings methodology, the addition of Katrina Greene to the EOC staff and the publication of the Back to School newspaper insert.

I. Improving Quality Data: Mrs. Elizabeth Carpentier, Deputy Superintendent from the State Department of Education outlined efforts undertaken by the SDE in the last twelve months to improve the accuracy of data submitted by schools and districts and published by the SDE. These efforts include implementation of the Student Unique Numbering System (SUNDS), the Longitudinal Data System and increased training for those who enter and utilize the data at the local district and school level. Mrs. Carpentier indicated the SUNS system included students in the 4K as well as K-12 programs and was 98.2 percent implemented. EOC members asked about implementation of SUNS in adult education so that the graduation rate could be captured. Dr. Janet Rose and Ms. Elainna Rickenbacker, Charleston County School District, presented two aspects of the Charleston process: the ARAS system for predicting students with difficulties and the processes by which data are verified routinely and errors corrected.

II. Child Development Education Pilot: Mr. David Potter and Mrs. Melanie Barton, EOC staff, presented the interim report on the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP). The interim report outlined the enrollments, administrative issues and start up challenges for the first year. A number of changes are to be implemented in the second year of the pilot, including the expansion to six more districts, attention to students with disabilities and/or non-English speaking students, and revisions to administrative procedures. The January 2008 report should include enrollments for the 2007-2008 year, student assessment information and teacher information. Members raised questions or commented on the grants for equipment and materials, the need for statewide implementation and the relationship of DSS licensure to program approval. At least one member suggested the program would be strengthened by wrap-around services and others asked if the process by which private providers are recruited is sufficiently robust.

III. Making and Sustaining Improvements: Dr. Frank Brown, MarketSearch, presented the report on executive interviews with superintendents in districts receiving technical assistance. He identified teacher recruitment and retention, the balance of autonomy and intervention and the costs of sustaining a strategy after state funds are removed as areas of continuing concern. Superintendents also discussed the challenge of meeting the moving targets under NCLB and the EAA ratings.

Dr. Rainey Knight, Darlington County Schools, and Dr. John Kirby, Dillon School District Three, talked with members about the changes and improvements in the districts in which they are superintendents. Dr. Knight pointed out that progress has been much slower than she ever anticipated; she focuses on creating conditions in which teachers can teach well. Dr. Kirby pointed out the need for strong building level teams, emphasis on technology literacy and the challenges of

student performance in the middle schools. Each questioned the capacity of PACT to identify and report student performance at the middle grades. They expressed strong feelings that teacher retention is more important than teacher recruitment. The superintendents expressed concern that the academic plans are not working well. Dr. Kirby talked about the need for a strong statewide vision and the role of the governor in creating and communicating that vision. When asked about teacher retention, Dr. Knight described the Darlington salary structure but indicated that a supportive administration and a teaching culture were as important as money. Dr. Kirby described the need for teacher housing and his district's efforts to repay loans, help with living expenses, adding merit pay and providing incentives for attendance.

IV. Task Force on Teacher Recruitment/Retention: Dr. Paul Horne, EOC staff, updated members on the work of the task force which is to be reported to the full committee in October. The task force has examined data systems, engagement of teacher preparation institutions and total compensation (more than salary) packages. Members asked for more information on the Georgia higher education goals for teacher preparation.

V. US History End-of-Course Test: Mr. Potter distributed materials on the US History End of Course Test and described the lack of alignment among the course as written, the course as taught and the course as tested. Responses to the teacher survey were shared. The EOC staff is sharing the information with the members of the Instructional Roundtable on August 16 and is to bring recommendations to the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee in September.

Tuesday, August 14, 2007

Members present: Mr. Stowe, Mr. Martin, Mr. Brennan, Rep. Cotty, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Drew, Sen. Fair, Sen. Hayes, Rep. Neal, Mr. Robinson, Rep. Walker, and Dr. Woodall

I. Executive Session-Personnel Matter: Mr. Stowe called for an Executive Session. Following the lifting of the veil, Mr. Martin moved that Dr. Anderson's contract be extended for a period of three years under the terms discussed. The members approved the extension.

II. Community Engagement-Mayor's Coalition to Prevent Juvenile Crime: Mayor Frank Willis (Florence) and Jim Shaw, Florence School District One, presented information on the community effort that has reduced gang activity and juvenile crime and increased school performance. The effort has brought together public and private groups to focus on these issues and build a comprehensive response to the needs. The Mayor and Coalition members are available to meet with local community leaders and officials around the state and explain how they have built the coalition and how it is successful.

III. Consensus Statements on Testing: Mr. Brennan drew members' attention to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Computer Based/Computer Adaptive testing. Members agreed with the recommendations regarding infrastructure development. After much discussion, members agreed with the Ad Hoc group and recommended that a statement of direction and coordination across school districts is necessary, with a strong focus on instruction. They requested that their concerns be developed into recommendations to the General Assembly.

IV. Distribution of NBPTS Teachers: Mrs. Barton presented a model for increasing the number of NBPTS teachers in rural South Carolina. Members questioned the purpose of NBPTS certification, performance linkages to student achievement, and concerns with rising financial commitment to the program. Prior to any decisions, the members indicated the need for information on the assignments of those receiving the state supplement and their retention in the profession. Rep. Cotty suggested that any action would require three years' notices and that perhaps the current

supplement should be divided into three components (certification, classroom assignment and working in a high poverty district). Members asked that this information and other alternatives be developed over the 2007-2008 year.

V. Priorities and Objectives for 2007-2008: Mr. Stowe asked that all business members serve on the Public Awareness Subcommittee and that Mr. Brennan serve as chair of that subcommittee.

Rep. Neal asked that the EOC's community involvement initiative expand to include building coalitions and/or providing information about initiatives such as the Mayor's Coalition in Florence to communities across South Carolina. Some questioned the capacity and role of the EOC in this effort. There was discussion of the EEDA regional education coalitions and their responsibility in this area as well as work conducted by the After School Alliance. Rep. Neal emphasized the responsibility of the EOC to use its bully pulpit to communicate the importance of these initiatives. Sen. Fair recommended this project be given to the Public Awareness Subcommittee to determine the capacity and costs of this effort.

In setting priorities for 2007-2008, the EOC asked that objectives be structured around the NBPTS questions, the computer infrastructure needed in schools, community collaborations, performance in the middle grades and early education. Several members asked that Judge Cooper's order be reviewed and that we examine the impact of current improvement efforts on the lowest performing 8-10 districts, including a community appraisal. Mr. Stowe emphasized the need to set a substantive goal for graduation rate and to continue to support the innovation initiatives. Other members suggested that we need to talk with deans of colleges of education and with principals about the mismatch between the teacher graduate and the classroom so that the problem can be defined clearly.

Dr. Anderson brought up concerns about the increase in rigor and the need for EOC clarity. Members indicated the importance of staying with the 2010 goal, but expressed strong concern about polarizations and the inability of groups with differing views to discuss alternatives. After discussion of the link between the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress designation and the state ratings, Rep. Cotty moved to sever the linkage. The motion passed.

Dr. Anderson is to provide draft objectives for consideration at the October meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.